

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinagore**

Ref: **303**

County: **Westmeath**

Mark: **221**

Category: **B**

Date: **06/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	39
The Built Environment	40	26	26
Landscaping	40	34	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	25	25
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	16	16
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	221	220

Overall Developmental Approach:

Ballinagore is an exceptionally attractive village and its tidy towns committee has done excellent work over the past number of years. Your attention to detail and adherence to ongoing planning for the village's future development is most welcome.

The Built Environment:

Ballinagore is a delightful small village in a very attractive rural setting. The redevelopment of the housing along the main street is in keeping both in style and scale with village architecture and supports its 'old world' atmosphere. The houses on both sides of the main street were well maintained, many dressed with colourful hanging baskets and pots of floral displays. In particular, the Ballinagore Tidy Towns premises with its window of children's anti-litter posters, and the entrance gates to houses set back from the main street were noted. Both the Arches Pub, its traditional style frontage and the school were well presented with attractive window boxes. There is no signage over the grocery shop which was closed at the time of inspection and the Post office looked well.

Landscaping:

The landscape work undertaken in and around the village improves as it matures from year to year.

The central island of lawn, furnished with picnic seating and beds of mature shrubs at Castletown junction looked very well. The wall and footpath which run from this junction to the school are excellent and provide a connection to the village. The stone wall with flower boxes and grassed area above continues to Marshalls house and on through to the Arches pub area. The footpath extends back to the wall and was nicely dressed with flower boxes. The Arches pub is nicely presented with window boxes, and on the opposite side of the turning for Castletown there is an attractive bed of plants and flowers. The small water pump feature on the village main street was very colourfully presented. Verges on all approach roads were well maintained. The horse pool is nicely dressed with an array of plants stepped down to the riverside.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The amenity area beside the river was most inviting, with good access, stone walls trees, cut lawns, picnic tables and the river flowing through a small waterfall. The adjudicator thought the old bridge arches be given a stronger profile and perhaps develop the small water 'fall' into an attractive feature through use of stone. Excellent nature walk. The wildlife garden in the school is commendable, but it is recommended that wildlife and plant identification information be put in place. The village's surrounding hedging provides a wild life habitat which is absolutely natural with wild grasses and flowers. The Westmeath Way walking sign was noted.

Litter Control:

There is no evidence of a litter problem. The litter bin distribution is effective and there is an obvious civic spirit in ensuring a litter free environment. Your management programme is working well.

Tidiness:

There is a little wirescape, but not too intrusive as most service wires are underground. The petrol pump presentation is disappointing and needs to be cleaned up. Road surfaces generally were good and there was good control of kerb, wall and building weed.

Residential Areas:

Residential areas within the village were nicely presented and surrounding housing displayed attractive with well maintained gardens. It was noted that there is concern regarding the development of new housing around the village. Ballinagore is fortunate to have such an active Tidy Town's committee which has already demonstrated its positive influence on village presentation. Development is essential to the village's future and no doubt the Tidy Towns committee will succeed in maximising its benefits and minimising its difficulties. The trees on top of the wall between Marshalls and the Arches pub, for example, should help screen the housing development in this area.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Red strips on main Mullingar road are a good safety feature. The stone walls on the approach from the Tyrrellspass are well maintained and feature natural wild flower which is very attractive. There is a delightful amenity area here with picnic tables set into the trimmed grass verge along with trees set in planters. On the right are small planters with rose display. The approach from the Kilbegan side is attractive with its cut verges, the copper beech trees and engaging view of the village over low stone walls. From the Castletown side the approach is through high bank verges which are rough trimmed, with some plants placed on the right.

General Impression:

The general impression is one of a pride in what the village has achieved and a concern that developments out of proportion to the village size will militate against its future. Keep up the good

work!